RAJYA SABHA

Thursday, 2&ih November 1985/
7 *Agrahayana!* 1907 *(Saka)*

The House met at Eleven of the clock, Mr. Chairman in the Chair.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

People living below poverty line in the country

*141. MISS SAROJ KHAPRADE: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) what is the percentage of people n the country who are living at iresent below the poverty line;

(b) what is the percentage of popu- ion who would be brought above 'he poverty line during the Seventh Five Year plan, year-wise;

(c)' what is the basis of determining the poverty line; and

(d) what follow-up action the Planning Commission is taking enabling the people who have been brought above the poverty line to maintain their economic standard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA): (a) Percentage is estimated at 37.4% for 1983-84. For 1984-85 it is provisionally mated at 36.9%.

(b) Percentage of population with base 1984-85 that would be brought above the poverty line at the end of the 7th Plan is estimated at 8.38%. No Year-wise estimates are provided in the 7th Fiv* Year Plan document.

(c) and (d) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

The basjg£©f determining the poverty line'%. the report of the "Task Force on Minimum Needs and Effective Consumption Demand", Planning Commission. According to this report, the poverty line is the per capita monthly expenditure level of Rs. 49.09 in rural areas and Rs. 56.64 in urban areas at 1973-74 prices corresponding to the calories requirements of 2400 per capita per day in rural areas and 2100 per capita per day in urban areas. This poverty line is up-diated by the price rise in the consumption basket. The up-dated poverty line is Rs. 6400 per household per annum in rural areas and Rs. 7300 per household per annum in urban areas in the Seventh Five Year Plan.

(d)' The Seventh Plan development strategy and the pattern of growth emerging from it are expected to lead not only to reduction in poverty but also to maintain the economic standard of those brought above the poverty line. The emphasis on accelerated agricultural growth, increased productivity of rice in eastern India, developing the potential of dry-land agriculture, adoption of special measures to increase productivity and income of small and marginal farmers, implementation of the Minimum Needs Programme and expansion of irrigation facilities will make a substantial contribution to this end.

MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE: Mr. Chairman, Sir, our Government is determined to remove poverty from the country by the end of 20th Century and our dynamic Prime Minister is visiting backward and neglected areas to know the problems on the spot. In that context, I would like to know from the Hon'ble Minister whether the Planning Commission has identified the backward areas in the country ^ like Vidarbha in Maharashtra, which would be taken up during the Seventh Plan and whether the State Government has been asked to cooperate in the removal of poverty i» those areas through various rural programmes and if so, what are those areas?

SHRI AJIT PANJA: Sir, so far as • the first portion of the supplementary ig concerned, reports on all the backward areas which the States were asked to identify, have come to the

Planning Commission. If any question is asked on a particular area like Vidarbha, I need notice t0 that effect. Wherever backward areas are identified, under two prone attack, poverty is being tackled. The first is direct attack like special programme of attacking poverty and second one is indirect attack, that is taking various fiscal measures.

SHRI R. MOHANARANGAM: Sir, the question was about people and not about areas.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You Will have a chance to put a supplementary.

MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE: Sir, my second supplementary is: I would like to konw from the Hon'ble Minister whether Government have set up a machinery to ensure that the benefite given under the programme actually reach the poor man and what follow up action is being taken in this direction and whether voluntary agencies are also engaged to maintain contacts with those people who have been brought above the poverty line?

SHRI AJIT PANJA: Sir, so far as the first portion is concerned, yes, a machinery hag been set up. In fact, our Hon'ble Prime Minister has made one special Department for Programme Implementation where the monitoring takes place specifically on paritcular subjecs designed for removing poverty. As regards the second portion, Sir, the machinery works after getting those reports. So far, in all other previous Plans, voluntary organisations were n°t directly involved but in the Seventh Plan, voluntary organisations are being involved.

SHRI S. W. DHABE: Sir, the statement made by the Minister in paragraph (c) and (d) seems to be a misgiving. He has made a statement that the poverty line in rural areas is Rs. 49.09 and Rs. 56.64 in urban areas at 1973-74 prices.

But the next statement which has been given is not per capita expenditure, but expenditure "per household per annum", that is, Rs. 6400 per household per annum in rural areas and Rs. 7300 in urban areas, in the Seventh Five Year plan. Therefore, may I know from the Minister whether the concept °f poverty-line which wag there in 1973-74 is changing from time to time and what is the ratio per month, as given in the statement, of Rs. 49.09 and Rs. 56 to Rs. 6400 and Rs. 7300? Is the pattern changing or is the method of calculating the poverty-line changing so as to hide the real position in the country?

SHRI AJIT PANJA: There is no question of changing any pattern, and the pattern has not been changed. In the first portion, per capita per month expenditure level has been given. In the second portion, we have given annually the entire household expenditure. But for the information of tbe hon. Member, I can break it down. So far as the 1984-85 price-line is concerned, for the rural area, the per capita expenditure .per month should be at least Rs. 107, and for the urban area, the expenditure per capita per month should be at least Rs. 122.

SHRI S. W. DHABE. Has it been changing, or is the same concept continuing from 1973-74?

SHRI AJIT PANJA: The same conecpt ig continuing. The inflation and the increase in population are taken into consideration, and that is why this position has come up.

SHRIMATI MONIKA DAS: I want to know from the hon. Minister how much had been allotted for education and allied services and rural development in the Sixth Five Year Plan and what is the allocation in the Seventh Plan. I also want to know how much total assistance is given in the Seventh Plan for Karnataka State.

SHRI AJIT PANJA: If any particular sector is mentioned—this question being about poverty-line—I need notice, otherwise I will inform the hon. Member later.

SHRI M. S. GURUPADASWAMY: Sir, at the present rate, as you are very well aware, it takes nearly more than five plans to abolish poverty and we will not see the end of poverty by the end of this century. Will the Minister consider taking some more comprehensive, drastic steps to tackle the problem of poverty and unemployment because they go together? Secondly, I would like to know whether the Government will have a fresh study made, a comprehensive enquiry about the state of poverty that obtains today because I feel, Sir, that the information given by the Minister is not absolutely correct, because there has been a continuous shift in the measuring of poverty. Therefore, may I ask him whether there will he a comprehensive study, enquiry, into the problem of poverty in the country?

SHRI AJIT PANJA: Sir, I take the last portion first. So far as a comprehensive enquiry is concerned, it is not neeessary at present _____

SHRI M. S. GURUPADASWAMY: It is necessary.

SHRI AJIT PANJA. .. . fo$_r$ this reason that we have followed that pattern, that scheme in the Seventh Plan. To remove poverty, we have specified special sectors for a direct attack on poverty. Therefore, the figures given here are correct, so far as our records are conerned. So far as the first portion regarding employment is concerned, which the learned Member has asked me.. .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Member.

SHRI AJIT PANJA: Hon. Member. It is a request for action.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Verma.

श्री वीरेन्द्र वर्मा: मान्यवर, क्या माननीय मंत्री जी यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि जो 1983–84 और 1984–85 में 0.5 परसेंट पावर्टी लाइन की कमी आई है, इसके एवेल्यूएशन का क्या मैथड था ? क्या केवल रुपया दे देना कि कितने लोगों को कितना रुपया दिया, यही उसका बेसिस है अथवा इसके अलावा और कोई मशीनरी इस प्रकार की है जो इस का एवेल्यूएशन करके इस नतीजे पर पहुंची कि हम इतने आदमियों को पावर्टी लाइन से ऊपर ले आयेंगे ?

SHRI AJIT PANJA: Sir, there is certainly a definite machinery to, first, find out how many people are below the poverty-line. There i$_s$ a National Sample Survey which takes place all over the country every five years.. .

SHRI VIRENDRA VERMA: That is not my question.

SHRI AJIT PANJA: The question may be repeated. I understood it in that way.

श्री विरेन्द्र वर्मा: एक वर्ष के अन्दर 1983–84 से 1984–85 में उन्होंने बताया है कि 0.5% आदमी पावर्टी लाइन से ऊपर उठ गये हैं । मेरा क्वेश्चन यह है कि ऐसी कौन सी मशीनरी उनके पास है जिससे कि इसका इवेल्यूएशन करते हैं कि हमने इतना कर्जा बांटा था और इतने आदमी हमारे गरीबी की रेखा से ऊपर आ गये हैं ? केवल रुपया बांटने के आधार पर उनका इवेल्यूएशन करते हैं या और कोई मशीनरी एवेल्यूएट करने के लिये है जिससे इस नतीजे पर पहुंचते हैं कि इतने आदमी गरीबी की रेखा से आ गये हैं ।

SHRI AJIT PANJA: I thought that I was answering correctly. Here the answe$_r$ was percentage is estimated at 37.4 per cent for 1983...

MR. CHAIRMAN; How do you estimate?

SHRI AJIT PANJA: The estimation is done by National Sample Survey Organisation by which every five years a national sample survey takes place. After that medicai experts have advised us to keep a person above poverty line in rural areas wher$_e$ 2400 calories per head intake is necessary and in urban areas where 2100 calories per head intake is necessary, and for a person to consume this intake in calories....

SHRI VIRENDRA VERMA: The answer is not to my satisfaction.

MR. CHAIRMAN; He is trying to answer.

SHRI AJIT PANJA: Unless I give {the base line how it is being done...

MR. CHAIRMAN: You are on right lines. Go on.

SHRI AJIT PANJA: After such a survey is taken, then we find out how much expenditure per person for that consumption is required for such calory intake, and taking the middle, we come to the conclusion, we come to this figure. If the honourable Member looks at the answer, fo$_r$ 1984-85 it is provisionally estimated at 36.9. That is the sampl$_e$ survey. The estimation made for 1983-84 o_n the basis of the sample survey was provisionally put at 36.9.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It i$_s$ not on the basis of the amount. It is on the basis of the intake of calories that it is assessed and that is what the Minister is trying to explain. As a former member of the Planning Commission, I can tell you. Now, Mr. Mohanarangam.

SHRl R. MOHANARANGAM: The per capita of the country is 1.4 per cent whereas the growth of the population is 2 per cent. Among the developing countries we see that per capita is more than the growth of population per annum. What are th$_e$ concrete steps taken by the Government to see that the per capita goes up? According to the population theory every 25 years population is doubled. According to our Planning Commission theory the income is not doubled every 25 years. What are the concrete steps taken by the Government to erase completely the povery line?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Not the line but poverty.

SHRI Ei MOHANARANGAM: The per capita is less than the growth in population...

MR. CHAIRMAN: This is planning.

SHRI R. MOHANRANGAM: Let the Minister answer my question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: There is nothing to answer. You have merely stated a proposition. If you put a question, than he can answer. You have merely stated a proposition. Now I call Mr. Patil.

SHRI DINKARRAO GOVINDRAO PATIL: Economic disparity is the basic cause of poverty and black money is the root cause of economic disparity leading to the high percentage of poor people particularly in the rural areas. For example, Sir, 78 co-operative sugar factories in Maharashtra earn every year a staggering sum of Rs. 3,120 crores as black money. This amount goes into the hands of the sugar lobby for controlling politics. I want to know from the honourable Minister and also from the Planning Minister whether the Government of India and the Planning Commission are planning to utilise this huge amount of black money..

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question is not relevant. Next Question.

Question No. 142. Mr. Patel.

Sidhumber reservoir project

•142. SHRI VITHALBHAI MOTIRAM PATEL: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Gujarat Government has submitted a proposal to the Central Government fo$_r$ environmental clearance for the Sidhumber Reservoir Project in tribal areas of that State; and

(b) what steps Government have taken to clear the proposal?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FOREST (SHRI Z. R. ANSARI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The project was appraised from the environmental angle, but not found suitable for clearance.

SHRI VITHALBHAI MOTIRAM PATEL: Sir, the Sudhumher project is in a backward area and it covers 99 per cent of the scheduled tribal area. So, if the project is cleared, it